



National Interagency Fire Center

3833 S. Development Avenue
Boise, Idaho 83705

September 10, 2011

To: Geographic Area Coordination Groups

From: National Multi Agency Coordination Group

Subject: Clarification of Direction for Canadian Airtanker and Bird Dog Operations

On September 2, 2011 NMAC issued a letter outlining direction for the operation of Canadian airtankers and Bird Dogs. This letter will provide additional guidance and clarification regarding different operating procedures for the State of Alaska **Cooperator** aircraft and the Canadian airtankers provided under the NIFC/CIFFC agreement.

Three Canadian registered CV-580 airtankers under contract to the State of Alaska have been mobilized to the lower 48 as approved cooperator aircraft. These airtankers have been approved by AMD and Forest Service under 351 DM 4, OPM-53, and FSH 5712.43 as Initial Attack (IA) resources and have no restrictions on their use. Operationally they can be used similar to other federally contracted airtankers and can be lead by U.S. ASM/Leadplanes or Canadian Bird Dogs. These **Cooperator** airtankers are identified as **T-142, T-147 and T-152**.

On August 28, 2011 additional Canadian airtankers were activated through the NIFC/CIFFC agreement. These Canadian airtankers are operated as a "group" with Canadian Bird Dogs as part of their operational model. Bird Dogs have a Canadian Air Attack Officer (AAO) on board and function similar to a U.S. ASM/Leadplane. The aircraft in the **Canadian Airtanker Groups** are identified as **T-144, T-145, T-153, BD-132 and BD-134**.

The standard operating procedure for the Canadian Airtanker Groups is as follows:

- If available, a Bird Dog will be dispatched with Canadian airtankers **T-144, T-145, T-153**.
- Canadian airtankers **T-144, T-145, T-153** must be supervised by a Bird Dog or U.S. ASM/Leadplane.
- Both Canadian Bird Dogs and U.S. ASM/Leadplanes may provide target identification runs ("show me" pass) for either Canadian or Forest Service contracted airtankers.
- Canadian Bird Dogs can perform the functions of an ATGS when a qualified U.S. ATGS is onboard.
- Canadian Bird Dogs are not authorized to "lead" Forest Service contracted airtankers.
- U.S. ASM/Leadplanes are not authorized to "lead" Canadian airtankers **T-144, T-145, T-153**.

Questions or concerns should be directed to Joel Kerley, BIA National Aviation Manager at 208-859-7215 or Pat Norbury, FS National Aviation Operations Officer at 208-387-5646.

/s/ Karyn Wood
Chair, NMAC